Countries are bringing similar regulations?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) The German Government's Packaging Ordinance dated 12-6-91 relates to avoidance of waste from packaging and envisages packaging from environmentally compatible, re-usable or recyclable materials. It covers sales packaging, secondary packaging and transport packaging, drinks packaging etc.

(c) and (d) Efforts are being made to disseminate the information to the Indian exporters so that they can meet the new regulations in order to promote our exports.

(e) We are not aware of similar regulations being brought by other European countries.

Ban on the imports of the goods by Germany and Switzerland

2879. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Germany and Switzerland are taking actions to ban the import of goods made by child labour;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether such ban will affect our carpet export; and

(d) if so, what are the steps taken to meet such a situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) there is no ban at present.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Employment of children has sometimes been publicised in these countries. In view of the likely adverse impact on Indian carpet exports, some measures taken in this respect include the supply of publicity material and video cassettes to importers which bring out the employment of children in its proper perspective.

India's balance of trade position

2880. SHRI RAM NARESH YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question No. 99 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd March, 1992 and state the position of country's balance of trade during the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): The country's trade deficit during the year 1989-90 and 1990-91 amounted to Rs. 7734 crores and Rs. 10640 crores respectively. The trade figures for the financial year 1991-92 are available upto April-December 1991 and the trade deficit for this period amounted to Rs. 3906 crores.

Enhancement of threshhold limit for recognition of export houses

2881. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with government to enchance the threshhold limits for recognition of export houses, trade houses and star trade houses; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The New Import and Export Policy effective from 1.4.1992 is being formulated.

India's trade relation with Kuwait and Iraq

2882. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of measures Government have taken, so far, to restore the trade relations with Kuwait and Iraq in the Post-Gulf-War period, till date; and

(b) what are the details of the areas in which India suffered a loss of exports due to Gulf-war?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) Ban on trade with Kuwait was lifted on 14th March, 1991 after her soverignty was restored. Since then exports to Kuwait

have been gradually picking up. Due to continued economic sanctions against Iraq, normal trade relations with that country cannot be restored till such time the economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council against Iraq are lifted. However, export of foodstufs, medicines and items of essential civilian needs to Iraq, is permissible within the parameters of the UN Security Council resolutions in this regard.

(b) As a result of the economic sanctions, exports to Iraq and Kuwait of items like engg. goods, food products, textiles, gem & jewellery etc. came down to Rs. 117.18 crores during 1990-91 (Provisional) as against Rs. 323.63 crores during 1989-90 (Provisional). Project exports to Iraq have also been affected.

India's trade in hard currency

2883. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will be Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to take some steps to have trade in hard currency soon;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof with background for such a step;

(c) whether India would be benefited by this move; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) India's trade is generally transacted in freely convertible foreign currencies (i.e., hard currencies). However, in case of certain countries, India has bilateral clearing arrangements envisaging balanced trade in non-convertible Indian Rupees.

Indo-US Trade Council Chairman's visit to India

2884. SHRI SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chairman of Indo-US Trade Council visited India recently; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the discussions held and what steps are being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The Indo-US Joint Business Council comprising Indian and US businessmen had its fourteenth meeting on 19-20 November, 1991 in New Delhi which was attended by the Chairman of US-India Joint Business Council. The agenda for discussions included implication for US investment of economic policy reforms in India, technology transfer, multilateral trade negotiations, programmes and policies to promote trade/ and investment, intellectual property protection and view of Indo-US trade.

The Joint Business Council made a number of recommendations on the subject that it discussed. The Indo-US JBC is a non-governmental body.

Export order for leather products

2885. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, New Delhi has received large export orders of leather items including shoes and safety boots, bags and fashionable items;

(b) whether some of the Public Sector Undertakings are also manufacturing such items;

(c) whether Government have taken any decision to utilise the available resources with some Public Sector Undertakings to meet the exporters' requirements of such products; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation, New Delhi, has not received any large export orders for shoes, safety boots, bags and fashionable items. However, it has received some trial orders worth around US $ 1,00,000 for leather jackets and executive accessories during the last eight months.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Tannery & Footwear Corporation of India Ltd., Kanpur and the Ordinance Equipment Factory, Kanpur are manufacturing footwear